

INCORPORATION OF CULTURALLY-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING ENGLISH WRITING TO STUDENTS OF LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT: THE PAPER FOCUSES ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF IMPLEMENTING INTERCULTURAL APPROACH TO TEACHING ENGLISH WRITING TO LINGUISTIC STUDENTS. ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO IDENTIFYING SOCIOCULTURAL DISCREPANCIES, THEIR PREVENTION AND CORRECTION. THE REASON OF STUDENTS' SOCIOCULTURAL ERRORS IS SEEN IN THEIR INEPT CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE CODE TRANSFORMATION. TO ELIMINATE THESE ERRORS LEADING TO CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS STUDENTS ARE SUGGESTED A SET OF EXERCISES AIMED AT BUILDING WRITING SKILLS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

KEY WORDS: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE, INTERCULTURAL APPROACH, CODE SWITCHING, CULTURAL CODE, LANGUAGE CODE, LINGUOCULTURAL INTERFERENCE, SOCIOCULTURAL DISCREPANCIES

ESTABLISHMENT of a successful intercultural dialogue brings up the problem of improving the efficiency and quality of future linguists able to participate in intercultural communication. The co-study of language and culture has called increased attention in contemporary language education.

THE choice of the foreign language teaching methodology is caused by an approach dominant in a certain period of linguodidactics. The changes of linguodidactic principles at different stages resulted in a shift of focus from the study of language as a system to the study of language as a means of communication, as a means of professional communication which later became the instrument of knowledge of the culture itself. Currently, much attention is paid to the formation of the personality of a student, studying a foreign language in cognitive, developmental and educational aspects. Thus the student acts as a mediator between different cultures. Contemporary language education pays great attention to the personality-oriented approach that involves consideration of education as "the student's creation of the world image due his active involvement in the world of culture" [1, p. 122]. The idea of personality-oriented approach later developed into the sociocultural linguistic approach aimed at investigation of linguistic graduates' personal perspective. Particularly this approach resulted in a joint study of language and culture. Secondary linguistic personality (I. Khaleeva), culturally-oriented personality (V .P. Furmanov), multicultural linguistic personality (G. V. Elizarova, L. P. Khaliapina) are dominants of language education today. In other words, linguistic education has become not only personal but also culturally-oriented as no one will

deny that language skills affect the quality and quantity of interaction between people from varying cultures.

THE command of intercultural competence of linguistic students depends on their ability to understand, accept and display respect to people of other cultures. Awareness of the cultural world view is motivated by the comparison of native and non-native cultures. Therefore, intercultural competence is one of the components, reflecting the specifics of an intercultural approach. These are skills of intercultural behaviour and verbal literacy necessary for successful communication in a foreign language, the possibility of establishing cross-cultural contact.

VERBAL communication can be carried out in two forms: oral and written. Being interdependent these forms of communication are both undeniably important though originally oral speech is primary, written is secondary. The primary function of writing lies in capturing oral speech with the purpose of preserving it in space and time. Unlike speaking that is dynamic writing unfolds statically. However, writing is a special form of productive verbal communication, a universal tool for implementing mental activity. According to such Russian psychologists as L. S. Vygotsky, A. R. Luria, S. L. Tsvetkova, coding of thought in oral communication is mainly unconscious, while in writing it is conscious on the contrary. The written language is more precise in all respects since words are chosen with greater thought and deliberation. Having no additional extralinguistic (non-verbal) means, writing has certain grammatical and lexical complexity that makes it easy for perception.

NOWADAYS the technology of teaching written communication in a foreign language is paid special attention since it helps prevent and correct sociocultural errors that complicate mutual understanding of native and non-native speakers. More consideration to teaching writing in a foreign language has been given in Russian secondary schools with the advent of final state exams. This somehow simplifies the task of university teachers as school graduates who have successfully passed these exams are aware of the requirements for the lay-out of various types of written papers: letters, resumes, essays, etc. Further development of writing skills is an essential component of the educational process in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard of higher professional education in relation to knowledge, skills and abilities required from linguistic graduates. Alongside with other requirements for the results of mastering the basic educational program, the graduate should be guided by the principles of cultural relativism and ethical standards, respect for the diversity of cultures and language societies which allow to ensure the adequacy of social and professional contacts [2; 3]. Thus, upon completion of study the graduate must possess intercultural competence that on the one hand lets him go beyond his native culture while on the other hand allows him to retain cultural identity acting as a so-called mediator of cultures.

IMPLEMENTATION of intercultural approach allows to optimize the process of mastering the skills and abilities of writing in a foreign language, to identify social and cultural discrepancies, to develop a methodology aimed at awareness and correcting of such errors at all levels of perception in written papers.

WRITTEN communication skills at an advanced level are built on the basis of such types of papers as essays, articles, reports, etc. Writing such papers implies practicing knowledge, abilities and skills necessary to compose them correctly. Written papers of graduate students are usually noted for a fairly high level of literacy. However, there are errors caused by the introduction of cultural norms of writing in the native language. This discrepancy between cultural and language codes is quite evident. The habit of encoding information in patterns of

the native language leads to both cultural and linguistic interference. Cultural and language codes have a direct impact on the selection and presentation of information. It is the internal encoding of information that explains why a particular word carries an important meaning for some and devoid of any meaning for others.

ONE of the main problems encountered is the so-called inability of students to switch codes. Unsuccessful transformation of codes explains those sociocultural errors which typically occur as a result of literal translation, following lexical and grammatical structures peculiar to the native language. Reliance on the native language causes barriers to intercultural communication. To eliminate such errors students are suggested a system of exercises aimed at building writing skills of intercultural communication in the foreign language. Much attention is definitely paid to the observance of the norms of writing accepted in another culture, choosing an appropriate style and register of presentation, variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Those assignments include exercises on matching, substituting, periphrasis, language-to-language translation, etc. Careful study of difference in the use of adverbs, paronyms, cognate words, homophones is also of importance here. Uncertain and, moreover, improper use of such words may lead to an apparent mismatch of meaning inherent in the message, and its distorted understanding by a foreign speaker.

THE reason for cultural and linguistic interference may occur when using verbs, adjectives and nouns which require prepositions different from those that quite normally follow them in the native language or are even not used at all. Examples of such words are: *to congratulate on, to face / to be faced with, happen to; tired of / tired from, sorry for / sorry about; advice on / advice about, delay in / delay of*, etc. In this case careful consideration is given to exercises of comparative nature which allow to see the difference in the use of prepositions and adverb particles in their application with time, place, dates, etc.

THE discrepancy in the use or omission of reflexive pronouns (*to behave, to feel, etc.*), the presence or absence of an object after phrasal verbs cause constant difficulty for students (Cf.: *to put smth. off / to put off smth.* for a noun in the function of an object and *to put smth. off* if the object is a pronoun) and can also lead to linguocultural interference. Wrong choice of synonyms can significantly affect the meaning of a statement (Cf.: *ashamed and shameful; shy and embarrassed; anxious, nervous, worried, bad-tempered*), generating not only lexical but also logical errors in communication.

PHRASES used to introduce new information and show its logical connection with the subsequent block of information are particularly noteworthy. Linking words and the way they function are of great importance in proper construction of any logically connected text. The most frequent cultural mistakes can be attributed to the use of such words as *also and because* at the beginning of a sentence. These words are quite appropriate to be used in the initial position of a sentence in the native language like “krome togo” and “tak kak”. Meanwhile, the use of these words in the same way is quite unacceptable in the English language. The above mentioned Russian notions should be expressed with the help of *in addition, furthermore, moreover, what is more, besides and as, due to, since, owing to* respectively.

AMONG other problems encountered in teaching English as a foreign language are the ways of transferring sociocultural stereotypes from one culture to the other, mapping of heterogeneous phenomena in different cultures (Cf.: *ambitious and ambitious*), incorrect use of culturally marked vocabulary and symbols adopted in two cultures and languages (Cf.: colour perception in English and Russian cultures and languages respectively). To prevent sociocultural discrepancies and correct them, contemporary language educators suggest using

authentic texts [4; 5]. The use of language there is presented in a natural social context, in the form adopted in a different culture.

THUS the main task of teaching linguistic students lies in their acquisition of intercultural competence that is seen in their adequate perception of the world view of people using another language and belonging to a different culture as well as the ability to analyze and correlate data of a foreign language with the conceptual sphere of the native one. Students who study languages for professional linguistic purposes should have an idea of the correct and competent ways of cross-cultural communication in written form. Neglecting of norms of intercultural communication in may generate cultural conflict and lead to serious cultural and language barriers.

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